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ABSTRACT

This report explores state level governance as it is currently practiced in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington. After a brief introduction, section II's attention to the evolution of state boards offers a historical perspective of state intervention in educational policy-making, a review of major questions concerning the state's role in the last 20 years, and an analysis of the development of organization and cooperation in and among the states in their approaches to education. Section III, on policy formation, examines current governance structures in each of the five states under consideration and reviews their board agendas, priorities, policy formation and development processes, and research utilization. In section IV, the author itemizes current "hot topics" in policy development for each state and gives a state-by-state list of publications in that area. The fourth and final section outlines four areas in the process of policy initiation and development that need clarification or improvement in several of the states and offers five recommendations for state boards confronted with problems in these areas. An appendix provides a sample of the "Governance Interview Sheet" by means of which information for the report was collected. (JBM)

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Research Summary Report

STATE LEVEL GOVERNANCE: AGENDA FOR NEW BUSINESS OR OLD?

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DECEMBER 1983

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PREFACE

During 1983, the Northwest Regional Exchange sponsored the development of six focused research reports whose topics were identified by the states within the region--Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and the Pacific area. The titles of these publications include:

- Designing Excellence in Secondary Vocational Education: Applications of Principles from Effective Schooling and Successful Business Practices
- Toward Excellence: Student Teacher Behaviors as Predictors of School Success
- State Level Governance: Agenda for New Business or Old?
- A Call for School Reform
- Global Education: State of the Art
- Equitable Schooling Opportunity in a Multicultural Milieu

We have found this dissemination strategy an effective and efficient means of moving knowledge to the user level. Each report is in response to state defined information needs and is intended to influence the improvement of school practice. In each case, a specific knowledge(s) base, anchored in research and development, is analyzed and synthesized. The process is more telescopic than broadly comprehensive in nature. Elements of careful selectivity and professional judgment come into play as authors examine the information against the backdrops of current state needs, directions, and/or interests. As a result, research-based implications and recommendations for action emerge that are targeted and relevant to the region.

This particular report begins to focus on state level policy-making in the region. It sets a base for understanding the manner in which current research findings in the area of Effective Schooling and the recent national reports promoting educational excellence are influencing policy trends in the region.

More specifically, this study of state level governance of education provides the reader with a review of the evolution of State Boards of Education, strategies and procedures for policy formulation and a look at policy trends at the state level.

Five states, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, were included in this study. All five of these states have similar constitutional language regarding public education but until recently, each operated quite independently from the others. The establishment of the Education Commission of the States in 1965 has provided a forum and an organization for developing closer relationships and increased communication between and among the states.

Federal mandates have had great influence on policy development in each of the states as have the fiscal issues which continue to be priority concerns of state policy makers. Although policies may be formulated by any citizen, most policies generally originate within the respective State Boards. Research influences policy development at some stage in each of the states. A second report to be developed during FY'84 will trace more directly such patterns.

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J. T. Pascarelli

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INTRODUCTION

On November 1-2, 1983, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory hosted a regional conference on Excellence in Professional Development. During the course of this conference, models of local school district efforts and individual state education agency efforts for school improvement were presented. In the discussion that followed with the participants, the usual and predictable reaction of individuals was to describe what elements of the Effective Schools Research would or would not work in their particular situation. In the majority of the situations where individuals indicated an element would not work, it usually was part of the remark that "the state will not allow us to do it." This response was typical and frequent.

The information on effective schooling research and ways to implement the practices currently fill the literature and is the theme for many conferences. However, most of the material written and presented about school improvement treats the school as a fairly autonomous structure where change takes place through a combination of "responsible parties" (teachers, parents, administrators, and community representatives acting together).[1] Usually, the hierarchy of authority described from the top to the bottom is: federal government, state education agencies and local districts. This hierarchy seems to be incomplete when individuals are questioned about who in the state will not let them do something. The response to this question usually reveals that they are referring to one or more of the following influences: state legislature, state court or

state boards governing education. Further investigation of these responses indicated that the influence has primarily come from the state boards governing education.

Results of the conference, the lack of any consistent acknowledgement in the literature regarding the role of state level governance and the awareness of singular, isolated examples of school improvement success with the implementation of effective schools research created a need to look further at state level governance as it is currently practiced. The over simplistic, and perhaps naive, hope was that if we had a better understanding of the evolution of state boards, past roles played as a result of federal mandates and current roles being played as that influence continues, educators might be able to promote state-wide changes as well as region-wide changes, under a new or revised governance structure.

There were several fundamental questions that needed to be addressed to form an information base, and to see if the conditions are developing that could force more extensive change in education. These questions are: What do State Governance Boards look like? Have they changed over the recent years? How much control do they have? Have they developed a process for policy change? How do they make policy? What are the trends for new policy? What are the problems confronting the attempts to implement new policies?

Since the meetings that stimulated the questions about system-wide, state level changes were in fact a continuation of a series of cooperative meetings with other states in the Northwest, it was decided that the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington would be appropriate to study and could be looked at simply and quickly. These states were selected for both their similarities and differences. The similarities were five. First, they were already cooperating in some regional efforts through the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland. Second, the interest of their citizens on major issues are similar, e.g., environmental vs. employment. Third, there are similar state extremes in school size. Fourth, with the exception of Washington, none were subjects of other current collective studies on policy changes.[2] Finally, there was enough communication and trust between the states, coupled with readily available material, to address the immediate questions of interest.

The differences were that Alaska, Idaho and Montana had rated very closely together on Wirt's 1972 School Centralization Scores and Ranks by states with scores of 31, 34 and 29 respectively, indicating a lack of strong state control of education, while Oregon and Washington ranked 6 and 5 respectively[3] indicating much more extensive state control. There were major influences that were generally regional in nature that also grouped Washington and Oregon together.[4]

The method of addressing the questions noted earlier was to combine the following four sources of information:

1. Review of the literature--The depth of investigation of the literature was determined after the literature was processed. Most of the current literature specifically addressing how policy is determined did not provide the specificity that was being sought.

2. Review of the state laws, policies and court decisions when available

3. Study of recently published educational material--The material and information obtained was "published" for state use and because of this, the information in this area was not uniform and often was very limited.

4. Interviews with a person in each state whose major responsibility was to work with the state level educational board

EVOLUTION OF STATE BOARDS

Historical Perspective

The Constitution of the United States specifically delegated the responsibility for public education to the states. State constitutions, using very definitive language, charged the legislature with establishing and maintaining education.

Washington	The legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public schools. Washington Constitution Art. IX, sec. 2.
Idaho	It shall be the duty of the legislature of Idaho to establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools. Idaho Constitution Art. IX, sec. 1.
Oregon	The Legislative Assembly shall provide by law for the establishment of a uniform, and general system of common schools. Oregon Constitution Art. VIII, sec. 3.[5]
Montana	The legislature shall provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools. Montana Constitution Art. X, sec. 3.[6]

This constitutional language in each state was complemented by a more detailed description of who would manage the system once it was established. For example, Montana's constitution states, "There is a board of public education to exercise general supervision over the public school system and such other public educational institutions as may be assigned by law. Other duties of the board shall be provided by law."[7] States display different historical patterns of control over local policies on such matters as curriculum, personnel, finance and teaching, but all states established minimums below which local school operations could not fall. Presumably the state's general welfare required a basic education opportunity for all children. Consequently, states require minimum days of school attendance, courses of study, and standards for teacher's licenses.[8]

This brought about a dual system with differing rationales for coexistence. The principal rationale for state intervention has been that only the state can ensure equality and standardization of

instruction and resources. This rationale was contested by local control advocates, who contended that flexibility was needed to adjust to diverse circumstances and local preferences. Local control advocates stressed that there was no proven educational technology that is optimal for all conditions. The traditional compromise has been a state minimum with local option to exceed the minimum.[9]

Policies for the implementation of educational change generally reflected this dualism. Over the years, minimum specifications have been gradually expanded and local discretion contracted, usually as a result of policies in each state.[10] The end result has been a situation of "sporadic enforcement" of either vague or very quantitative policies initiated in response to local complaints.[11]

The Last 20 Years

In the early 1960's, similar to the situation of today, a focus on the quality of education caught the attention of a majority of the citizens. The Post-Sputnik period of the 1960's surfaced a variety of issues that affected schools on a larger scale than they could reasonably be expected to handle separately. State political and educational officials, whether they were ready or not, were quickly thrust into a role where they were "expected to play a creative role in upgrading standards, stimulating local initiative, relating local educational programs to national needs, and assisting with a variety of other concerns."[12]

This new or resurrected recognition that the role of the state needed to be more proactive raised some policy considerations that are still high on the priority lists of states. These questions include: "How can the states, with limited resources, best assure that state educational policies are soundly based? How can they best draw upon the experiences of one another? And, in an age of increasing federal involvement in education, how can the states best guarantee that federal educational policy complements and reinforces state policies rather than playing havoc with them?"[13]

These general questions were further complicated by specific issues that seemed to appear simultaneously in systems that were not known for rapid innovative changes. These included teachers' issues (collective bargaining, quality of preparation, wages, role in curriculum, etc.), participation of the public in decision making, advocate organizations, court decisions and federal mandates. The only certainty was uncertainty.[14]

Development of Organization and Cooperation

It was primarily federal involvement (and funding) in education that placed the states in a position that is somewhat analogous with the question that led to this look at policy formation. How can the totality of a broad educational issue or mandate be addressed cooperatively by all the states rather than state by state? One solution to the problem of federal mandates was suggested by James B. Conant. Conant, who studied several educational problems and issues in the 1950's and early 1960's, decided in 1964 to draw together some implications of his studies for

educational governance in the United States. Shaping Educational Policy was the result. Conant's principal recommendation in this book was for an "interstate planning commission for education." A new commission, he asserted, could better coordinate and rationalize educational policies and programs among and within the states. Constitutionally, the federal government was barred from such a role and the states had to take the initiative.[15]

While the announcement of Conant's proposal elicited mixed reactions, the discussion of its merits was given special urgency in the spring of 1965 by new federal initiatives in education. In April of that year, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became law. The responses of state leaders to ESEA revealed considerable ambivalence. The officials welcomed the national commitment to solving the nation's educational ills but feared that state control of education might be seriously jeopardized as a result. They reasoned that Conant's proposed commission might be a suitable vehicle through which the states could come to terms with Washington.

For whatever reasons, the establishment of the Commission proceeded with alacrity. In late September 1965, an interstate compact authorizing the "Education Commission of the States" was formalized in Kansas City, Missouri. Official ratification by many states quickly followed over the next months. In June 1966, the state-oriented Commission held its first official meeting in Chicago.[16]

The activities of the states, as they began to function within the commission, was a revelation of the trials and tribulations of any new organization. From its inception, the purposes of ECS were to get

involvement and prioritize concerns, develop strategies for dealing with the priorities and develop policy positions. An Education Commission of the States report for the years 1973-1974 outlines their philosophy and goals.

> Education and politics. That's what the Education Commission of the States (ECS) is all about. Education in the United Stages is a state responsibility. Thus, education and politics are inextricably linked. ECS is a nonprofit organization formed by interstate compact in 1966 to further working relationships among state governors, legislators and educators for the improvement of education in its broadest sense at all levels.
>
> The commission's philosophy is to work with the states to reform and renew education throughout the nation. The goal is to develop a partnership of public officials and education leaders with each state and among the states. The commission serves as a forum, a resource and a catalyst. Both as part of its regular services and in response to requests from the states, the commission provides information on state-related education activities and, when appropriate, suggests options and alternatives to meet specific state needs.[17]
>
> (Forty-five states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands were members of ECS at the time this report was written.)

A 10 year review of the newsletters and accumulated writings of the Education Commission of the States, after the purposes of the organization were resolved, indicates an increased cooperation between states in prioritizing objectives and setting policies. It also reflects that other educational organizations, while working separately, responded when invited to participate and began to work toward common educational ends. The educational priorities of school improvement moved to the forefront of the states.

In 1977, the Annual Report of ECS under the section on Elementary and Secondary Education listed the priority issues.

Priority Issues (Adopted by the Steering Committee in March 1977)

1. Education Finance
   Federal/State Relations
   Basic Skills Development
   Competency-Based Education
   Cost Benefit and Cost Effectiveness
   Assessment and Evaluation
2. Education Administration/Management/Planning
   Governance and Structure
3. Alternative Educational Structures
   Educational Technology
4. Educator Preparation (Utilization) and Evaluation
   Accreditation and Consumer Protection
5. Early Childhood Development
6. Child Abuse
7. Equal Opportunity for Unique Populations
   Equal Rights for Women in Education
8. Educational Personnel Benefits/Collective Bargaining
9. Discipline
   Individual Rights
10. Public Opinion and Involvement
11. Curriculum: Programs and Reform
12. Ancillary Services[18]

The December, 1978 front page story of the ECS newsletter told of the cooperation between the Education Commission of the States and the Educational Task Force of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).[19] By 1979, it was reported that "State groups meet in historic sessions"[20] when the Council of Chief State School Officers, Education Commission of the States, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Council of State Legislatures, National Governors' Association and State Higher Education Executive Officers met together to begin a discussion of issues. It appeared that by June of 1979, the emphasis was moving more directly from a "watchdog" on federal legislation to more sharing and cooperation in school improvement areas

between the states. The ECS Chairman Elect, Michigan Governor William Milliken, called for "improvement of ability to work together" and the adoption of a task force report recommending accountability. The task force (chaired by New Jersey Governor Brendon T. Byrne) recommended an accountability process that should be adapted, according to Manning, not only to the state level but also to systems of higher education, individual institutions, and components of those institutions. Manning noted several specific task force recommendations:

- Each state should provide for the accountability of higher education by a process that includes: (1) setting goals and purposes, (2) clear identification of who is to accomplish these goals and purposes, (3) advance agreement on how achievement is to be evaluated and (4) public reporting through responsible state officials.
- The accountability process should include the assessment of state and institutional actions.
- Statewide educational goals should be established.
- There should be periodic assessment of progress toward state education goals.
- Assessment results should be reported to the governor, legislature, education officials and the general public.
- States should provide adequate rewards and sanctions to encourage the achievement of goals.
- There should be clear assignment of responsibility for conducting the accountability process.
- States should establish minimum standards for licensure and continued operation of all post-secondary education institutions.[21]

In 1980, the ECS Annual Report again stressed the priorities of the states with the number one priority as:

> The State Role in Improving the Quality of Education. This includes the assessment of quality of individual schools, school systems and postsecondary institutions. It includes programs to increase minimum competency of students, improve teaching, provide financial incentives for school improvement, and similar state initiatives.[22]

By February 24, 1980, the "state-based" organization moved to speak with a collective voice to the new Secretary of Education.[23]

The leadership skills, the cooperation, the focus on instruction and curriculum, coupled with an interest in assessment and evaluation, evident at the beginning of 1980, "expanded the opportunities for the State to provide leadership."[24] The impetus to move ahead and translate national priorities into state policies was underway.

POLICY FORMULATION

Current Governance Structure

Some very general structural relationships are common to all the states. Fiscal responsibility for education rests with the legislature and the governor. In almost all states, the governor develops an education budget and presents it to the legislature. The legislature in turn has formal responsibility for reviewing this budget and passing it in some form. State boards and state departments of education must then administer the budget. State boards also establish requirements to guide the administration of other policies that have been enacted by the legislature and the governor, and state departments administer these policies. State boards and state departments also perform quasi-judicial functions in some instances.[25]

It was hypothesized earlier that as the Governance Board evolved concomitant to the federal mandates of the preceding twenty years, it was influenced in its structure and its policy-making process much the same way as State Education Agencies were influenced.[26] Our study focused

on the structure, process and direction of governance boards in the five states without being overly influenced by political factors. This was difficult because the practice and extent of politics in education has expanded considerably over the years.

As state legislatures and governors' offices have become more professionalized, their interest, at least in the fiscal aspects of education, has increased. In most states public education accounts for between 30 and 35 percent of total state expenditures and usually constitutes the largest single item in the state budget. Consequently, even if the substance of public education were not a political issue, its funding would be. The governor, state legislature, and various constituent groups pay close attention not only to the total amount spent on public education, but also to how funds are allocated among local districts and for what programmatic purposes.[27] These recurring political issues are often unclear in discussions on governance of state level education.

During the interviews with the states, when a question about the governing board resulted in a political reaction, it was recorded. However, no specific political/personal response was identified in the matrix for each state. Such remarks were synthesized from the original interview notes to maintain confidentiality.

The states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington manifest three different models of governance, two of which are common to other states and one that is a unique variation.[28]

In the Alaska model, the Governor appoints seven members for five year staggered terms. The State Board in turn appoints the Chief State

School Officer. While the Alaska model appears to be consistent with other states, a unique variation exists in the members' appointments and terms, i.e., the members are appointed by the Governor for five year staggered terms, but they serve at the pleasure of the Governor and can be replaced at any point in their term if there is a change in administration.[29]

In Idaho, Montana and Oregon, on the other hand, the Governor appoints the Board and the Chief State School Officer is elected by the electorate. The membership of the Boards and the terms are as follows:

Idaho: seven members appointed for five year staggered terms[30]

Montana: seven members appointed for terms of seven years that expire on a staggered basis to provide continuity[31]

Oregon: seven members appointed for four year staggered terms, with one reappointment possible[32]

Washington: seventeen member State Board (16 elected members plus one member from the private school sector) elected by local school board members. The 16 public school members serve for five year staggered terms.[33]

While the models of governance that these five states utilized were known, scant information existed about the membership of their boards and very little information was available on organizational changes which had occurred over the recent years.

The representatives of the five states were asked, "Have you had any organizational changes in the last twenty years?" Only Montana and Washington indicated there had been an organizational change. Washington indicated that their Board had increased from 14 to 16 members while Montana reported that their Board had been divided and re-established as a result of a new constitution ratified in 1972. Montana now has a governing board for K-12 schools called the Board of Public Education and

a Board of Regents for the public colleges. This change was followed by legislation in 1977 that provided for a professional staff to function for the Board of Public Education.

While organizational changes can provide clues to policy directions and legislative intent, what about states that have had no organization change for many years? What are they doing? The following question was asked of all states as a check on change, "Have you had any procedural changes in the last twenty years?" Each state reported all the following conditions:

1. All the board meetings have increased, usually to a schedule of two-day meetings monthly or bi-monthly. This increase is probably greater than it would appear since all boards reported that they were utilizing techniques for efficiency (work sessions, pre-meetings, retreats, etc.) and searching for other avenues to get more done in a shorter period of time.

2. A stated or implied shift of the Boards to a more active role, especially if they had been categorized as a passive state has occurred (for a discussion of active and passive roles see McDonnell and McLaughlin, Education Policy and the Role of the States, 1981).

3. A legislated process to ensure a monitoring of responsibility and assurance of populist review by each board has been instituted.

4. All believe their authority has been clearly defined. Montana, in response to this question, indicated that because their Board was new constitutionally, there was a search for and a formulation of relationships between their Board and other groups.

Board Agenda Review

Other questions asked pertained to Board agendas to see if there were any common areas of interest and if the five states were concerned about

the same or similar issues. After several agendas had been reviewed and categorized, the following information was provided individuals being interviewed:

> I have categorized a Board agenda into the following four general categories:
>
> 1) Information Items - a person on group wants to inform the Board of something - no action is required
>
> 2) Personal Item - a person wants to communicate with the Board on an issue - usually involves only the individual - information or action
>
> 3) Curricular/School Item - major focus is the school
>
> 4) Direct Governance or Additional Responsibilities, e.g., Direct Administration of a Deaf and Blind School
>
> Respondents were then asked what categories they would change or add.

Alaska and Idaho added "Finance" to the list. Idaho, along with Oregon, included "Vocational" as a category. In addition, Oregon mentioned other areas of special consideration such as Elementary Programs, Division Items and "Special" items.

Each state was also asked about which agenda item had increased the most in the last five years. In response to this question, Alaska and Montana indicated that the greatest increase was on school/curricular items, Washington indicated excellence in education and Oregon reported staff development. All of these responses could actually be grouped together as school/curricular items.

Process

The strategy for policy analysis was to have each state outline the steps it takes to move an idea or suggestion into a formal policy.

Policy had been defined as "an authoritative communication about expected behavior for certain target groups of people in State Education settings."[34] It was quickly evident that there was a problem with semantics and an operational problem with this definition.

The definition was modified to provide some commonality of meaning between research and practice. What was being sought were those "things" that boards create that actually have the force of law. Did the definition address this or was it so broad that position statements and letters (authoritative communications) from boards also fit into it? The term "expected behavior" was also confusing to the states. The definition was revised to "an authoritative communication having the force of law about expected behavior and results for targeted groups of people and institutions in State Education settings."

Once this definition was in place the semantics problem was resolved even though "policy", as used in each state, did not always meet the parameters of the definition. Additional elements used to actualize the definition were Regulations and Rules.

The three elements used by the five states, Policies, Regulations and Rules, were subjected to scrutiny in light of the definition to ensure consistent communication. The states were asked the following series of questions:

> Who can initiate policy?
>
> Who usually initiates policy?
>
> How do you prioritize requests for policy?
>
> Once initiated, what sequence of events occurs to bring about a formal policy? Is it the same for every policy?
>
> What is the shortest time it normally takes to get a policy in place?

The responses to these questions were quite similar. A discussion of those responses will be provided in the pages to follow.

Policy Development

It appeared that policies which were adopted (or refined) in the '60s were in direct response to mandates of the federal government. Additionally, the states generally reported that policy can originate from any citizen although policies usually originate from within the State Education Agencies. When policies originate from other sources, there is usually a screening process before they are considered by the Boards. In addition to this screening process being reported, several states mentioned a legislative review of each proposed policy since their administrative procedures and the organization that administers them are a creation of the legislature.

Once initiated, proposed policies are prioritized in much the same way by all states. This is usually done in a work session involving SEA representatives, Board staff and, frequently, Board members (usually the chairperson). Three of the five states indicated controversy and political climate influenced priority placement of proposed policies.

One person interviewed indicated that the political climate shifts priorities so quickly that an agenda cannot be formalized too far in advance. This person also indicated that they had been forced to involve more people in the setting of priorities in order to reduce the vacillating political climate.

Once initiated, prioritized and submitted for public hearing, it normally takes 2-4 months to enact a policy. This time requirement is

the result of the administrative procedure. Montana's procedure is a general illustration of the type of steps involved.

> Step 1. As part of its agenda, the Board amends a rule or adopts a new one.
>
> Step 2. The Board Executive Secretary submits the rule to the Secretary of State for notice in the Montana Administrative Register. The Register is published twice a month. With respect to public comment, two situations occur: (1) The Board submits the rule for notice in the Register without a hearing. However, it must hold a hearing if a certain number of people request it. (2) The Board submits the rule for notice and announces a hearing. In that case, the hearing cannot be held any earlier than 20 days after the notice.
>
> Step 3. The Board Executive Secretary, thirty days after notice, submits the rule to the Secretary of State for adoption, again to appear in the Montana Administrative Register, published twice a month.
>
> Step 4. Unless stated otherwise, the rule is in effect one day after adoption.
>
> Step 5. Once every quarter, the pages in the Administrative Rules of Montana are revised to accomodate the changes or the new rules.[35]

All states have a process to ensure that no rule is created without exposure to administrative review and public scrutiny.

Research Utilization

Since the Effective Schools Research stimulated the interest in governance, and the various national reports on Excellence have resulted in states and schools addressing school improvement, each state was asked: "What relationship does research usually play in policy considerations?" They were given three choices:

1) Policy is usually initiated as a result of research.
2) Research is considered after a concept for policy has been identified.
3) Research is usually not considered.

Two of the five states responded that research was used to support the policy concepts already identified (Item 2). Two of the other three states thought that they best fit somewhere between Items 2 and 3 and one state noted that they generaliy used research as a basis for policy (Item 1).

To verify their opinions, each state was asked if there had been any policy change in the following five areas representing Effective Schools Research:

1. Set statewide goals for achievement in the basic skills

2. Add school-level planning to accreditation requirements; philosophy, goals, objectives, evaluations, etc.

3. Add knowledge of the effective teaching research to teacher certification requirements

4. Adjust administrator certification requirements to include the sets of expertise needed by building level instructional leaders

5. Eliminate program rules, regulations and fiscal requirements that impede school-level coordination of all programs[36]

The response by state to number 1 was as follows:

Alaska--yes--established
Idaho--high school requirements
Montana--establish basic instructional program
Oregon--yes - new policies - revised and adopted September 1983
Washington--graduation requirements

Responses to Questions 2-5 ranged widely and showed little consistency as indicated below:

No. 2 - one state governance board felt accreditation was primarily a State Department duty and they stayed out of it.

Two states had voluntary accreditation.

One state had done nothing in accreditation and one state felt their accreditation program needed improvement and was not sufficiently qualitative.

No. 3 and 4 - One state had incorporated a small amount of the effective teaching research into their Teacher Education Standards, but more could be done. They had not yet adjusted their administration requirements. One State Board, even though another agency controlled certification, was looking at the quality of people going into teaching while another state with the same structure reported it was out of their jurisdiction. One state indicated they were studying teachers' education, while one state indicated a change in their direction for standards.

No. 5 - Generally there was little if any response to this question. One state did mention they had reviewed their accreditation standards in 1981 to eliminate and update rules.

As a result of the lack of response to this question, it was rephrased and asked again later. This question was: "Are there any legislative mandates, court decisions or past board policies that you can think of that aid or hinder you on current or future policy decisions?" Two states indicated single specific state court decisions in response to this question.

POLICY TRENDS

Each state had indicated some awareness of the Effective Schooling Research, had participated in meetings on the subject and had considered some results of the research. In order to determine the extent of influence this research is having on current and future policies, each state was asked "what are the current 'hot topics' being considered for policies?" The results of this question for each state follow:

Alaska

New mandates for elementary education
High school graduation requirements
Coordination between secondary and postsecondary
Extra curricular activities
Teacher certification
Budget issues - Research going on and a policy committee formed

Idaho

Increased requirements for high school/open admission policy for college
Incentives for new teachers
Remedial education
Role and mission of colleges
Revising tuition, IC system formula for funding (high education)
Excellence
Reciprocity
Salary equity
Professional studies accounts (tuition pay backs)

Montana

Teacher testing
Gifted and talented
Certification
Sex equity in sports
Intrusion of extra curricular on educational time
Graduation requirements as they relate to college admission
Education technology
Professional development

Oregon

Planning for excellence
School problem with religious groups

Washington

Private schools
Basic education - allocation/quality and interpretation
Fiscal
1. Plans for construction
2. Defaults of contracts
Legislative - 47 education issues raised by governance committee

Published Material

It was assumed that items for policy development that change educational systems are usually not single ocurrences but a sequence of events indicating a pattern of interest. The "published" material from each state that was available was reviewed to see if it coincided with

the opinions of those interviewed regarding direction and to see if the material presented any patterns of school improvement. The available material which was reviewed is indicated below (some is yet in draft form):

Alaska: State Board of Education Actions on Effective Schooling (1982-83)

Idaho: A Report to the Idaho State Board of Education from the Commission on Excellence in Education (1982)

Montana: The Montana Poll[37] (a survey of how Montanan's feel about the quality of education in their schools)

Goals for Montana Education (1975)

Excellence in Montana Schools (1983)

Working Toward Excellence in Education (1981-1982)

Curricular Review: A Process for Montana Schools (1983)

Oregon: A Proposal for Focusing Oregon's Systems of Quality Assurance on School Days (1983)

Elementary and Secondary Guide for Oregon Schools (1980)

Wash. K-12 Accreditation Program (1981-1982)

Statewide Survey About Education Concerns[38]

CONCLUSIONS

State Level Governance has been presented the opportunity of making sweeping and lasting changes in the educational systems. Like the students in the schools they govern, state boards have progressed through a process that has often been difficult and challenging, and are now to a point where they could begin to function as leaders.

The federal mandates of the 60's and 70's forced state governance boards to move away from their gatekeeping role over a loosely coupled system toward a more demanding and comprehensive role as an organized structure. They were thrust into this role generally without training or skills of the type necessary to plan or organize on a large scale. Since the mandates were nationwide and usually tied to funding, all states experienced comparable problems. Because of the comparable problems and the need to react quickly and uniformly to the federal government, state governance boards were forced to move to organizational structures designed for broader purposes, i.e., ECS. In addition, other existing organizations impacted by the educational mandates directed their individual efforts toward the new crisis and added their support for a larger cooperative voice. The 1960's and 70's saw all the conflict of any new or revised organization manifested in educational governance.

These 20 years of educational movement developed a framework of interest, management and action for state level governance boards that would allow them to function differently in their organization's setting in the 80's if confronted with a different set of immediate realities. The new techniques of management and authority once accepted by the boards were not in reserve awaiting another crisis, but were being applied in the local setting as evidenced by the growth of new and expanded issues on board agendas and the accompanying increased workloads for boards. These educational issues and questions, while increasing, appeared to take a lower priority than regulatory items brought about by the federally funded mandates.

Events during this 20 year period of time had a major role in influencing states in general and regions in particular. The states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, for instance, had historically "gone it alone" to meet their needs. In education, while many similarities existed, each had organized differently based on these needs. Washington and Oregon had demonstrated a strong, organized governance system while Alaska, Idaho and Montana had a less pronounced system. As cooperation was desired, these systems moved closer together. While the organizational structure, which is difficult to change, appears to be fairly consistent, a more significant gauge of activity is the question of procedural change. All states report four striking similarities that have developed. The increase in workload; a change in philosophy; a legislative process to monitor the board's rule-making; and a clarification of authority. When these similarities are compared to the board agenda items, it is interesting to note that the curricular and school items have increased the most. However, financial considerations are now increasing in importance as items for consideration and action. Boards indicate that their authority is clear cut and they are moving from the rather vague area of their constitutional "general supervision" and in some cases "gatekeeping" role to one of active and detailed leadership.

It would appear that the direction that boards are moving and the type of issues in which they are involved require a substantial amount of information and research for decisions. However, it does not appear that boards feel research is significant in initial policy decisions. The important determinations of priorities for items that may eventually

become formal policies are influenced by board members, state education agencies, controversy and politics and are as different as each state.

Once a policy is initiated, however, a process is in place in each state that assures a public review of the proposed policy.

The process of policy initiation and development appears to have at least four areas which need clarification or improvement in several of the states. First, there does not appear to be any formal, recognized procedure, consistent with the legislatively mandated review, to initiate proposed policy. The lack of this formalized procedure confuses groups and individuals who should be involved in bringing the policies that affect them to the boards. One board's informal statement that "Every issue considered for a rule must have the support of all the educational organizations in the state" does not give a step by step procedure to an insterested group. In turn (and second), the boards do not have any consistent way of stimulating wide-spread support for an issue. State success in building support for a policy after it has been formulated has been quite limited, especially when tested over time.

Third, it appears that issues proposed for policies are motivated by a general attraction to the idea rather than by a detailed specific need. For example, the idea of changing the training of administrators to provide better administration for school improvement is an attractive idea. However, it should incorporate concepts of backward mapping[39] to find out the specifics of "better administration."

Finally, a process such as backward mapping to look at the underlying factors involved in formulating a specific policy change requires some information on what those factors are. A decision by a state board to

implement change in teachers' or administrators' training to improve school implies that they know and have considered the Effective Schooling Research in this area. The use of research appears not to be too significant as a foundation for policy considerations for the following reasons:

1. Distance of Analytic Ivory Towers[40]
2. Impeding action.
3. Preference to test concepts put into place in each state and thus create their own research findings.

In summary, the state boards that govern education in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington are more alike organizationally, procedurally and operationally than they are different. This movement has generally occurred in the last 15-20 years with some escalation in the last 5-10 in areas of finance and school improvement. The boards view themselves as having the experience, authority and responsibility to provide leadership and policy for the future for the stage education system.

Recommendations

The separate state boards that are confronted with these problems could:

1. Extend or add a formal process to gain input and stimulate interest in initial educational policy proposals. These procedures should be the same for each issue.

2. Review how lasting policy is made and consider adjusting procedural model and management style to coincide with current literature on productive organization. (It might be helpful to see how individual successful schools have brought about change and implement that process for themselves and possibly later for the system.)

3. Initiate policies based on the reasons for change.

4. Incorporate research into the process at initial stages.

5. Review all existing law, court decisions and past policies. Consider the effects on proposed policy. (This review needs to be accomplished by a committee knowledgeable in both law and education to understand its ramifications on the total system.)

If these modifications were made, a board could easily move from the same "old" business to a "new agenda" for education in each state and the region.

FOOTNOTES

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30. Interview with Kim Phillips, Secretary to the State Board, Boise, Idaho, November 18, 1983.

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APPENDIX

Governance Interview Sheet

Structure and Make-up:

Have you had any organizational changes in the last 20 years?

Number of board members_____

Terms of board members_____

Have you had any procedural changes in the last 20 years?

How often does the Board meet?

Has this increased in the past few years?

Has the Board's role changed?

Is Board authority clear cut?

Board agendas:

I have categorized the Board agenda into the following four categories:

1. Informational Item
2. Personal Item
3. Curricular/School Item
4. Direct Governance Additional Duties

What categories would you change or add?

Has the Board time spent on any category above increased or decreased in the last five years?

Process:

Who can initiate a policy request?

Who usually does?

How do you prioritize the request?

Once initiated, what sequence of events occurs to bring about a formal policy? Is it the same for every policy?

What is the shortest time it normally takes to get a policy in place?

What relationship does research usually play in policy consideration?

1. Policy is usually initiated as a result of research.
2. Research is considered after a concept for policy has been identified.
3. Research is usually not considered.

Are there any legislative mandates, court decisions or past board policies you can think of that aid you or hinder you on current policy decisions?

Policy changes:

Have there been any policy changes in the following 5 areas?

1. Set statewide goals for achievement in the basic skills.

2. Add school-level planning to accreditation requirements; philosophy, goals, objectives, evaluations, etc.

3. Add knowledge of the effective teaching research to teacher certification requirements.

4. Adjust administrator certification requirements to include the sets of expertise needed by building level instructional leaders.

5. Eliminate program rules, regulations and fiscal requirements that impede school-level coordination of all programs.

What are the current "hot topics" being considered for policies?